

It's Smart To Be Gallery Wise!

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWS FLASHES

March 1 - 15,

1936

HUNGARIAN PAINTINGS: The chief loan exhibition for the month of March will be a group of some sixty paintings and watercolours by contemporary Hungarian artists. Assembled by the International School of Art, the group has been shown in New York, Brooklyn, and Baltimore.

It should prove more interesting than the other International exhibitions which have been shown here, as only seven artists are represented, each by a number of works, so that his style and manner can be readily studied.

Like Russian painting, there is very little background for pictorial art in Hungary, if we except the very theatrical and realistic Munkacsy of the 19th century. There have, however, always been the gayly colourful music and peasant crafts and it is to these that the artists, almost all of whom are of the twentieth century, turned after the war and the formation of a national Hungary. We find then, instead of sophistication, a fresh child-like quality to this new art.

Elizabeth Luther Cary of the New York Times, finds a great likeness between these paintings and the spontaneous work of children - "---there is the same leaning toward bright, strong, and varied colour; toward free, loose brushing with little concern for fixed boundaries, and back of technical characteristics, a tendency to move in a world that has been described as at the boundary between truth and fairy-tale, between heaven and earth, between reality and imagination".

Count Julius Batthany is perhaps the most individual and accomplished of the artists. He studied with Vaszary, one of Hungary's foremost painters, and later in Munich and Paris. He has had exhibitions in Berlin and London and is represented in all Hungarian museums. His work is marked by a fantastic, almost gruesome imagination, in which there is a relieving sense of mockery. His "Fishwoman" is arresting and powerful, there is a rhythmic, fluid flow in the landscape, and the figure is attenuated and exaggerated, as is the great basket of fish on her head.

The work of Paul Molnar is well known internationally for his woodcuts and book illustrations. In this field, his latest and best work is a series of thirty-one woodcut illustrations for Rostand's "Cyrano". All of his paintings in the present exhibition are of religious subjects and they are expressed in a formula that recalls Giotto in its primitive feeling, yet they are all intensely modern.

Stephen Pecary, who has contributed the largest number of canvases, is perhaps the most native and Hungarian of the group. His "Peasants" is almost a caricature, and shows a keen sense of humor and a definite feeling for pattern and design. His "Maids and Lads" is as naive as a Rousseau, but without the subtle sophistication of the latter. The composition is arranged in rows of houses, cattle and tiny figures in their gay and colourful native costumes. It is to Pecary, then, that we must look for a world that is pure Hungary!

The exhibition will open the first of March and continue until the thirtieth.

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HANDFORTH DRAWINGS: The group of pencil drawings and prints by Thomas Handforth that opened on February 23rd in the south loan gallery is already causing much interest and favorable comment.

Born in Tacoma, Washington, at the turn of the century, Handforth studied with Hawthorne and later at the Beaux Arts in Paris. He had already achieved a name for himself with his powerful western prints, when in 1931 he was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship and went to China for one year. The lure of the Orient was too great for him and he remained there until the fall of 1935.

The greater part of the five years was spent in a charming old palace in Peiping, where the artist made the acquaintance of Laurence Wickman of the Gallery staff. He made several excursions into Mongolia and other outlying sections of China, and to Cambodia. He went always armed with his pencil, and the fascinating results of his keen observation will be seen in the rapid, incisive sketches included in the exhibition. He was ever in close touch with the people of China, from the ruling Prince of Mongolia with his dancing wrestlers, the devout pilgrims who on hands and knees go yearly to the mountain shrine of Maio-Feng-Shan, strolling players and athletes, Lama priests and exotic, flower-like native girls.

In his landscapes he has caught the majestic beauty of the stark yellow and brown plains of China, with their leafless trees, the individual pagoda architecture, or the sweep of willows reflected in motionless pools.

It will be interesting to compare the pencil sketches of Cambodian dancers or wrestlers and the lithographs which are the final results. The growth of his style can be seen, from the thin, linear quality of his earlier drawings and engravings, to the fuller, more plastic forms of his latest work in a technique that recalls rubbings.

His greatest success lies perhaps in his ability to catch the essential characteristics of his subjects. Particularly strong is the "Head of a Tonganese Soldier", and his "Lama Priest" is at once romantic and arresting.

Mr. Handforth will be in Kansas City sometime before the end of his exhibition, March 15th, and it is hoped that it may be arranged for him to meet Gallery visitors. Many of the drawings are for sale at most attractive prices.

ORREFORS GLASS: Sweden, which has made a great contribution to contemporary architecture, has been the home of the most important development in modern glass. An exhibition of the latest designs from the Orrefors studios is being shown in Gallery XVI for the month of March. Their beauty, colour and practical adaptability will make the exhibition a most interesting one.

There has been a close affinity culturally between France and Sweden and almost a dependence of the former on the latter. This was interrupted during the World War and it was necessary for Sweden to develop markets and crafts for its artisans.

The little town of Orrefors had been a center of the iron and glass industry from 1726, because of the existence of ores and the abundant forests for fuel. The glass was principally commercial and ink bottles and window panes the only thing produced. Then in 1917 the glass plant was purchased by Johan Ekmon, a wealthy resident of Gothenberg, who had become interested in the Swedish artist and in the slogan "More beautiful things for everyday use". This and the recognition that the machine age is here to stay, but that the machine can be controlled, has been the watchword of the Orrefors directors.

Two men, both formerly artists, have been most responsible for the beauty of the forms and the decoration. Simon Gate emphasizes form combined with movement, and weaves a close, intricate pattern. Edward Hald uses flat surfaces more freely, with a classical simplicity.

The chief interest is centered in engraved and etched crystal, and cut glass has been restored by them to a position of importance through a new method of cutting which retains transparency. Color, when used, is pale and elusive, and tends towards faint smoke, mauves, blues, and greens.

JAPANESE DARUMA: The Masterpiece of the Week for March 1st will be the fine wooden Japanese Daruma of the Kamakura period (1185-1333).

According to legend, Daruma is the 28th patriarch of the Buddhist religion in India, China and Japan. In the latter country he founded the Zen school of Buddhism, which taught salvation through the knowledge of one's own being.

Always shown as a grim, forbidding figure, legend also has it that he had set for himself the task of contemplating a temple wall for eight years. Assailed by sleep in the performance of this task, the monk cut off his eyelids so that his eyes might never close. Hence he is usually represented as seated with wide-open, staring eyes.

This example in the permanent collection is one of the finest in America and was the subject of an excellent painting by the American artist, Cox.

COURBET SEASCAPE: An exquisite seascape by the French 19th century artist, Gustave Courbet, a new acquisition purchased last summer in Europe by the Director, will be the Masterpiece of the Week for March 8th.

Courbet was an innovator in a number of respects. He is the first of the great realists, the first artist to paint a snow covered landscape in which we see nature alone and without human figures, and he is one of the forerunners in painting the sea in its many moods.

In the summer of 1865 he and Whistler were together at Trouville and the many aspects of the Channel must have fascinated him, as he has left a number of impressions of it, either serenely calm as in this new acquisition, or tumultuous, as the example in the Metropolitan Museum.

The pearly quality of the colour harmony is exquisite, as subtle in its tonal relations as a Corot or a Boudin, and quite unlike the more obvious and richer colours Courbet ordinarily used. He has smoothed the gray-mauve foreground with his palette knife, and has obtained an extraordinary effect of the sandy beach in the shadow of a great cloud. The middle distance is in bright sunshine, and there is a tongue of golden sand stretching into the cool green of the sea. A group of tiny figures stand on this spit, all in browns and tans. The sky is a superb passage, opalescent with great fluffy lavender clouds.

Tiny white sails dot the horizon, and there is a surprising feeling of depth in the picture, with a sleepy, calm laziness to the whole as the white-capped waves roll slowly in.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: On Wednesday evening, March 4th, Mr. Sickman will lecture in the Atkins Auditorium at 8:00 p.m. on Japanese Art through the Tosa School.

The first culture in Japan came to the island kingdom from China through Korea. At times it is difficult to differentiate the early Buddhist sculpture, so similar is it to its Chinese prototypes. Then the art of Japan became more national and by the time of the Tosa school, the foundation for simplicity and fine craftsmanship which has since marked the art of this country, had been laid.

The subject of Mr. Gardner's lecture on Wednesday Evening, March 11th will be "Seascape Painting". The use of landscape alone as subject matter in painting dates from the 17th century, but interest in the sea comes at an even later period. In fact, it is not until the 19th century that artists turn to it and its various moods as an inspiration for their canvases.

GALLERY CHANGES: Gallery XVIII has been installed with a group of the finest English, French and German porcelains from the permanent collection, and a case of Georgian silver. Two of the finest pieces of lace are also on exhibit, including the flounce of Brussels Bobbin lace made for the Emperor Charles VII. A pair of English 18th century small cabinets from the Chapman Collection have also been placed in this gallery.

A series of Japanese Prints of Court Ladies has been placed on exhibition in Gallery XXIV. With them has been hung a selection of kimono textiles from the large permanent collection. Some of them were special designs woven for the royal family and are splendid examples of brocades and embroideries or the intricate tied and dyed silks for which their craftsmen were so famous.

With them has been placed a case of Japanese pottery, and tea caddies, tea bowls, oil dishes and Saki bottles in rich shades of tan and brown are included. Part of a large group of the permanent collection, this is the first time that these have been shown.

MUSICAL PROGRAMS: The regular monthly musical program of the Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota will be held on Sunday, March 15th, at 3:30 P.M. in the Atkins Auditorium. It will be preceded by a short exercise, beginning at three o'clock, when a fine pencil drawing of Charles Lindberg will be presented to the Gallery collection by the Chamber of Commerce. This study from life by Edna A. Hoadley was purchased soon after Lindberg made his epic flight to Europe.

The Mu Phi Sorority will present a musical program on Sunday, March 8th at 3:30 P.M. in which the relationship of architecture and music will be stressed.

The public is cordially invited to both of these concerts.

KANSAS CITY PRINT CLUB: The newly formed Print Club will hold a meeting in Atkins Auditorium on Monday evening, March 2nd, at 8 P.M. Mr. Tom Collins will speak, and the moving picture film on etching made by Frank Benson will be shown. This is perhaps the finest and clearest explanation of this most interesting branch of graphic arts that has ever been made.

The Auditorium will be reached that evening only by the Fockhill Road entrance, and members and friends are invited to attend.

GALLERY LOANS: Our superb Guardi, certainly the finest in America, the exquisite pair of Mariesschis and the rare Tiepolo "Hagar and Ismael", have gone to St. Louis for the month of March where they will be featured in the loan exhibition of Italian 18th century Art at the City Art Museum. The Gallery is happy to cooperate with a neighbor institute.

RECENT VISITORS: Miss C. F. Bieber of Peiping, spent two days at the Gallery recently. She is an authority on Chinese Textiles, and many of the fine and rare examples in our collection were purchased with her advice and assistance. She is on her way to the London Exhibition, and this is her third visit to Kansas City.

Councilman John Anderson of Blackpool, England, visited the Gallery one wintry day in February and marveled at the superb lighting. He remarked that on such a day in London, one could not see the paintings. He was particularly interested in the Georgian room, and recalled having sat on our three-back settee one day when having tea at Bramshill Park, before it left that famous palace.

FRIENDS OF ART: Three of the fine examples of contemporary American paintings which have come to the Gallery through the Friends of Art, "The Sun Treader" by Thomas Hart Benton, "View of Malnate" by Luigi Lucioni, and "The Dead Pheasant" by Henry Varnum Poor are now hanging in Gallery XXX.

Anyone interested in participating in the fine work that this society is doing, can obtain information by calling the Secretary of the Gallery.

The Director will spend the week end of March 7th in Lincoln, Nebraska, as the guest of the Art Association there. He will speak on Modern Art in connection with the exhibition of American artists which is being held through the month of March.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Gallery Tours - March 1- 27 At 2 p.m. No charge to join them.	March 3 - Masterpiece of the Week	
	" 4 - Classical Art	Mr. Freeman
	" 5 - Chinese Bronzes and Painting	- Mr. Sickman
	" 6 - Prints	Mr. Wittmann
	" 10 - Masterpiece of the Week	
	" 11 - Near Eastern Art	- Miss Hughes
	" 12 - Chinese Sculpture and Temple	- Mr. Sickman
	" 13 - Italian Painting	- Mr. Freeman
	" 17 - Masterpiece of the Week	
	" 18 - Dutch-Flemish-German Painting	- Mr. Freeman
	" 19 - Chinese Ceramics	- Mr. Sickman
	" 20 - American Painting	- Miss Jackson
	" 24 - Masterpiece of the Week	
	" 25 - American Indian	- Miss Hughes
	" 26 - Japanese Art	- Mr. Sickman
	" 27 - English and French Painting	- Mr. Wittmann
	Evening Lectures: March 4 - Early Japanese Art	- Mr. Sickman
8 p.m. in Atkins Auditorium. No admission charge.	March 11- Seascape Painting	- Mr. Gardner

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art
4525 Oak Street
Kansas City, Missouri

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